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“Any news from Poland?” Representations of the Polish EU presidency in the Greek media

Introduction

On July 1, 2011, Poland took up the presidency of the EU Council for a period of six months. It was the first time for Poland to take up the responsibilities of the EU presidency, while the country was the largest of the new member states that entered the EU during the 2004 enlargement. Although the holding of the presidency came at a difficult time, and one full of challenges for Europe, it was a unique opportunity for Poland to make the most of it and exploit the advantages from its advanced position in the EU.

The accomplishments of the Polish presidency were remarkable, if only to point out the following: in the area of economic and monetary policy, the Polish presidency saw an agreement on and the entering into force of the ‘six-pack’ – maybe the best-known of the European Union’s recent legislative acts. Agreement was also reached on the EU’s budget. But how well informed are European citizens about EU matters? Is the EU news coverage in member states sufficient? What is the contribution of the media in member states in promoting EU actions and policies? Which are the parameters that affect the variations of the EU media coverage in member states? Given this overview of ideas, the article discusses the news coverage of EU-related foreign events in member states, with special focus on the media coverage of the Polish presidency in the Greek media. Particular attention is given to how concrete Greek nationwide online and traditional media cover, approach and present EU issues and what are the parameters that determine the media’s selection procedure of specific news items.

The methodological approach used in the article is a comparative analysis which employs both a theoretical background and empirical research. The essay is divided into two parts: the theoretical part and research part. The first provides a theoretical framework regarding the media coverage of news about the EU and important events in member states in light of the

terms *foreign news value*, *agenda setting in national media* and *domestication of foreign news*.

The second part is dedicated to the empirical research and analysis (quantitative and qualitative) of the data gathered in order to reach the final conclusions and closing remarks of the essay regarding the media coverage of the Polish EU presidency in Greece. The quantitative analysis was based on coded features of the news and opinion items. Through primary research among concrete Greek media (nationwide newspapers that have a high circulation, nationwide state TV stations, online media and the website of the European Commission Representation in Greece) the study brings to the fore the coverage of the Polish EU presidency's activities in the news, under the shadow of the financial crisis in Greece. Journalistic materials (news items, reports, editorials, columns, news commentary, press review, comments, reports, interviews and others) were collected during the period from June 15, 2011 until January 30, 2012. The data were selected using the keywords *Poland and the EU presidency*, *Polish EU presidency* and *Poland*, and were coded using as a methodological tool a coding guide for analyzing the research findings. The survey was based on the following media: (1) state (public) television station: *NET* (Hellenic Broadcasting Corporation), (2) online media: *www.ert.gr* (Hellenic Broadcasting Corporation), (3) weekly newspapers: *To Vima* (English title "The Tribune") (center), (4) online newspapers (daily): *www.tovima.gr*, (5) Representation of the European Commission in Greece.

The comparative analysis reaches the conclusion that the coverage of the Polish EU presidency in the Greek media was not satisfactory or proportional to the range and significance of such a European issue. It is noteworthy that the coverage of EU issues in the news flow in the Greek media was in general very high, due to the fact that all these issues included explicit reference to nationals and to the impact on the country, as they were strongly connected to the severe financial crisis in Greece. So, the element of the domestication of foreign news, along with the elements of foreign news values and the valuation/attitude towards Poland, affected the Greek media's criteria for the selection of events taking place in the EU becoming news items and play a key role in the Greek media agenda context. Due to the fact that the Polish presidency coincided with the climax of the financial crisis in Greece, the Greek media focused their attention on the coverage of EU news directly related to that subject and its impact on the European Union and the eurozone.

EU news coverage from a theoretical perspective

As a union of states the majority of which function in the eurozone, the EU is a large entity that needs effective political communication. Some scholars claim that the official communication produced in Brussels and Strasbourg serves only the elites, because its content, language and accessibility can be very complicated and hard to understand for ordinary citizens (Peter, 2003, p. 23; Schlesinger, 1999, p. 264). On the national level, EU communication often concentrates on the domestic impact of EU issues rather than EU-wide issues. Communication between the EU and European citizens is fundamental for the functioning of the Union, and here emerges the role of the media as information platforms to make such communication happen. The media are the principal means by which the majority of people receive information about policy issues in general, and the EU in particular (*Eurobarometer* 61, Page and Shapiro, 1992, De Vreese, 2003).

The study of media coverage of an event, such as the presidency of the EU Council, is of particular importance since the media are the most important source for Europeans to get their information about the EU. European citizens should want and be able to gain as much knowledge about the EU as possible, in order to be aware of what happens in 'the common European home' and affects their lives and future.

It is a fact that the administrative services of the European Union cannot sufficiently inform European citizens about its processes and policies by itself (Anderson & McLeod, 2004; Meyer, 1999; Morgan, 1995), so the EU relies on the media to indirectly strengthen its legitimacy by increasing citizens' awareness of its activities and policies. The media can help increase not only the public's knowledge about the EU, but also its interest in it, and they can contribute to the formation of a common European identity. Therefore, the high visibility of EU news in the media is desirable, considering the media are a very important source of information for the public (Mughan & Gunther, 2000, p. 3; Norris, 2000; Prior, 2005, p. 579).

In order to examine the foreign media coverage of Poland and the Polish presidency of the EU Council, the article employs the concepts of EU media coverage, media agenda, foreign news value, domestication of foreign news and sources of information about foreign events.

In relation to EU news coverage, most of the studies converge on the fact that the coverage of EU issues in the news flow is, in general, very low (Machill, Beiler & Fischer, 2006) except for important events such as the

EU presidency, European elections, referenda on various EU issues or the introduction of the euro into a country (Peter & de Vreese, 2004, p. 5; Semetko, de Vreese & Jochen, 2000).

Some studies about EU news coverage deal only with the frequency of EU news, while others with the importance (Bruter, 2004; De Vreese & Semetko, 2002) or prominence given to them by the media (Peter et al., 2003, 2004; Peter & de Vreese, 2004). When the EU is covered in the news, it is mostly with a neutral (Peter et al., 2003) or negative tone (De Vreese et al., 2006; De Vreese & Semetko, 2002). The news about Europe also differs in its 'European nature', which is the extent to which the EU is covered as a pure European issue, or in terms of the 'domestication of news', which implies a connection to national issues and actors, with the second type prevailing (Semetko et al., 2000; Trenz, 2004).

The results of this study about the coverage of the Polish EU presidency in the Greek media are based upon two strategies of foreign news domestication: explicit references to Greek nationals or the impact on Greece. Along with the aforementioned strategies goes the Greek media's tendency to focus mainly on politicians and other national actors when they cover news regarding European matters. The core issue in this study is the coverage of important EU events (in this case the Polish EU presidency) in the Greek media and the theoretical framework, which was presented above, plays a decisive role in the analysis and interpretation of the research findings that follow. Our intention was to set the basic theoretical elements, as covered by the literature, upon which the empirical research is based.

News coverage of the Polish EU presidency in four Greek mass media providers and the European Commission newsletter

The case study profile

In order to investigate the news coverage of the first Polish presidency of the EU Council in the Greek media, it could be considered necessary to explore the Greek media landscape as a whole. As this was clearly impossible to include in the limits of this specific survey, we chose to present a case study regarding four of the most popular media in Greece and the newsletter of the Representation of the European Commission in Greece.

More specifically, we investigated one online medium, one newspaper with a high circulation, one online newspaper, the second state Greek television channel and the European Commission's Newsletter. The criteria, upon which the selection of the four media and the EU Newsletter was made, were the nationwide cover of the aforementioned media, their high circulation/readership, their penetration of the public opinion, the viewership/audience ratings in combination with their 'origin' (state owned stations) as well as the 'co-existence' of their 'traditional' profile along with their online profile.

Before moving on to the empirical research, it would be useful to present the basic characteristics of the mass media that were analyzed as well as their ranking in the audience's preferences in order to justify our selection.

The newspaper *To Vima* is a Sunday newspaper (weekly circulation). It used to have a daily circulation as well, but the financial crisis that has affected the Greek media since 2010 led to the interruption of its daily circulation. According to the *Greek Newspaper Circulation Nationwide Bulletin*, during the period from June 2011 until January 2012, the newspaper *To Vima* was ranked second in terms of readership. The newspaper also has an electronic edition, www.tovima.gr. *Tovima.gr* is ranked 40th in Greece in the Alexa traffic rankings.¹

Moving on to the TV field, *NET* is one of the three state television stations of the Hellenic Broadcasting Cooperation (ERT S.A.). The ERT S.A. mission, according to its founding principles (N.1730/87), is the organization, exploitation and development of state radio and television as well as its contribution to: (a) pluralistic information, (b) education, and (c) quality entertainment for Greek people. In accordance with its founding principles, ERT does not aim to make a profit. *NET* has a mainly informative orientation and holds the responsibility of transmitting news, broadcasting the prime time evening news bulletin. According to Nielsen Audience Measurement Greece, for the period from June 2011 to January 2012, *NET*

¹ Compared with internet averages, this site's audience tends to be between the ages of 25 and 55; they are also disproportionately childless, highly educated men. Approximately 82% of its visitors are in Greece, where it has attained a traffic rank of 32. Approximately 42% of visits to *Tovima.gr* are bounces (one pageview only), and its visitors view 3.4 unique pages each day on average. Based on internet averages, *tovima.gr* is visited more frequently by males who are in the age range 35–44, have no children and are college educated (Alexa, 2012).

was ranked among the last places in people's choices.² *Ert.gr* is the website of ERT S.A. which has a continuous news flow and live streaming.³ It is the official representative of the European Commission in Greece and its newsletter simply presents the events and statements of the EU officials.

The newsletter is published every week and it consists of press releases regarding actions, measures, legislative work, activities of the Parliament, the Commission and the Council, and the statements and activities of commissioners. The basic idea that characterizes the newsletter is the neutral approach to all the events and news published. The authors approach the news items with a neutral attitude and they do not express personal opinions or points of view. They function more like employees of the EU, following a strict professional framework, rather than journalists expressing their opinions.

The essay analyzes the amount of journalistic materials (news items, reports, editorials, columns, news commentary, press review, comments, reports, interviews and others) printed, broadcast and posted referring, on the one hand, directly to the topic of Poland holding the EU presidency and, on the other hand, to Poland but not (or at least not directly) to the aforementioned topic, as well as the attitudes of the Greek media towards Poland. The basic tools used in the survey to evaluate the representation of the Polish EU presidency in Greek media are the following: (1) The amount of news flow regarding Poland as well as the frequency of news coverage of the country during the period of the presidency. (2) The dominant frames and perspectives used in news materials. (3) The sources of information presented in the media (journalist, foreign correspondent, news agencies, national news organizations, other media). (4) The news items' relevance to Poland. (5) The major actors involved. (6) The opinions that are expressed in articles, comments and analyses. (7) The sources of comments and analyses. (8) The Greek media's attitude towards Poland.

² See: <http://www.agbnielsen.com/whereweare/dynPage.asp?lang=local&id=248&country=Greece>.

³ Compared with the overall internet population, its audience tends to be between the ages of 35 and 45; it also appeals more to highly educated, childless men browsing from home. About 27% of visits to the site are bounces (one pageview only), and visitors to the site spend approximately 34 seconds on each pageview and a total of three minutes on the site each day. Search engines refer approximately 16% of visits to *Ert.gr* (Alexa, 2012).

Research findings

NET (Greek state TV)

During the six-month sampling period, the state television station broadcast only eight news items referring to Poland. Among them, only one was dedicated directly to the Polish EU presidency, presenting the beginning of the six-month holding of the EU presidency, as well as the aims and priorities of the country. This was the only detailed report on the taking over of the rotating EU helm, with special references to the fact that Poland is a post-communist country and that since accession its economy has seen rapid growth, being the only EU country not to have experienced a recession in the last twenty years. The duration of the report, the details, the comments of the anchorwoman and the report from the TV station's correspondent in Poland, giving the pulse of the news, is noteworthy. Also noteworthy is the station's attitude towards Poland, giving emphasis to the rapid economic growth, despite the said EU member state being a former communist country, and the attempts of the country to prove to the EU that it can succeed in its new role to overcome the economic crisis in the European Union. So, the attitude towards the Polish presidency is positive, with some negative hints about the 'communist past' of the country.

Five of the remaining news items referred to Poland only as the venue country and host of the EU summits, EcoFin and Eurogroup summits, the formal meeting between the Greek Prime Minister G. Papandreou and the President of the European Council H. Van Rompuy, giving more emphasis to the EU summit of October 26, 2011 which was crucial for the future of the Greek financial crisis. All of the above news items were seen from the point of view of the Greek financial crisis and the reference to Poland was only to provide a setting. The attitude was neutral. Even in the last news item, about the beginning of the Danish EU presidency, the only reference was to the rotating presidency and to the fact that the successor of the EU presidency is again a country outside the eurozone. Finally, one report was dedicated to the Polish elections (October) in the middle of the presidency as a distraction from the purpose of the presidency.

As we see in Figure 1, the majority of *NET*'s news coverage about EU events (58%) was not relevant to Poland. The state television paid the minimum attention directly to the Polish EU presidency and focused on other topics, not related to the presidency but in the framework of the financial

crisis that is plaguing Greece, dedicating more time to the European procedures for exiting the crisis.

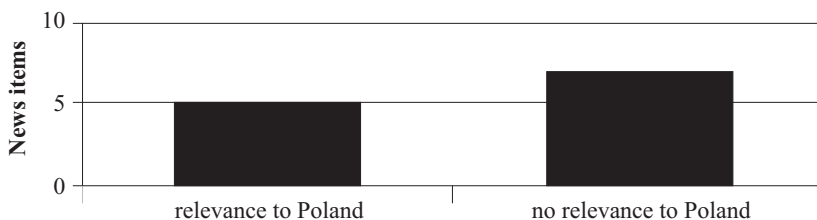


Figure 1. *NET's* coverage: relevance to Poland

The financial situation in Greece monopolized *NET's* interest and that is the reason the dominant topic was economy (Figure 2). Other news items that were related to Poland were about sport and referred to the hosting of the European Football Championships of 2012.

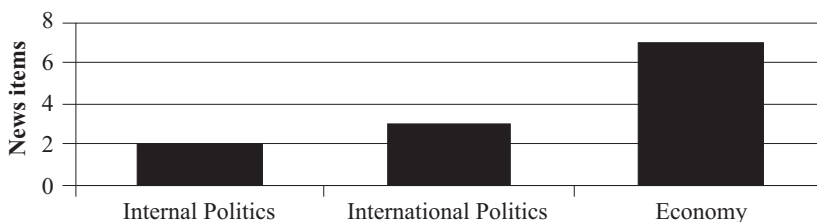


Figure 2. *NET's* news coverage dominant topic

All the news items related to Poland were characterized by references to Greece and the impact on the country. In general, the attitude towards Poland was neutral, with a small reliance on stereotypes and skepticism towards the role of Poland in holding the presidency (Figure 3).

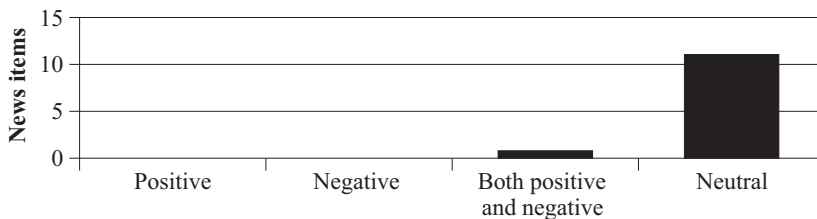


Figure 3. *NET's* attitude towards Poland

Online media

Ert.gr

In order to evaluate the journalistic material posted on *www.ert.gr*, we have to take under consideration that the above website belongs to the Hellenic Broadcasting Corporation, as well as *NET*, and as a result the site posts almost the same news items as the television station broadcasts. The difference is that the site posts news derived from the Athens News Agency/Macedonian Press Agency (Greek national news agency), while *NET* broadcasts reports prepared by the station's journalists. In relation to that, it is important to say that the main source of information is the national news agency, although the site has staff with expertise in international news.

During the sampling period, *www.ert.gr* posted only 12 news items, in the same way as *NET* did and with the same topics. As a website with news streaming, *ert.gr* should have had a wider and more detailed news coverage about the Polish presidency of the EU Council, with special references regarding the aims, priorities and actions of the Polish presidency itself. News items and reports regarding the Polish presidency were posted on the front webpage with part of the article and continued with a link in a new 'window'.

The site paid little attention to the Polish EU presidency, focusing more on Poland as host of events and meeting venue (mainly for the EURO 2012 and for the EU summits as well). The majority of the news items posted were under the category of sport, with the main subject being the football matches and the players taking part in the championship. Indicative of the minor importance the site gave to the Polish EU presidency is the fact that not even one of the news items about Poland was fully displayed on the front webpage. On the contrary, part of the article was displayed in the front page accompanied by a link leading to a separate 'window'.

The portal's dominant topic was the economy and the issue of the Greek financial crisis dominated all the news items, even those referring to the presidency. In terms of the domestication of news, every news item about the Polish presidency had explicit reference to Greek nationals and to the impact on Greece, emphasizing the actions of the Greek politicians on the sidelines of the EU summits.

The attitude towards Poland was neutral, in general, with slight reliance on stereotypes of Poland as an ex-communist country. There were

also references to the controversies between the Polish government and the EU about the participation of Poland in the eurozone summits.

Representation of the European Commission in Greece

It is worth mentioning that there were only three news items regarding the holding of the EU presidency by Poland. There was a single detailed reference to the Polish presidency on June 30, 2011, announcing the press conference organized by the Polish embassy in Athens, followed by an extended text analyzing the scope and the aims and priorities set by Poland. One of the frames used to describe the impact of the Polish presidency on Greece was a press release about cultural events in the Polish embassy in Athens regarding the Eastern Partnership, Central Europe and the Balkans, in the framework of the closing of the Polish presidency, with the presence of the Ambassador Michael Klinger. In this press release there is a cultural orientation to the nation with no further encoding symbols or interpretations, just a neutral presentation of the event.

As the newsletter has a different structure and does not use common news formats, like the other media investigated in this study (no journalistic structure), the dominant topics vary according to EU schedules and information policy. The source of information is always the same, the European Commission, and the genre of the news items is always the same, a press release, with no opinions included or major actors involved.

In the body of the press releases, the basic frame used is the role of Poland as a EU member holding the presidency for the first time, without any further extensions.

Moreover, there are references to Greek nationals and to the impact on Greece. The attitude towards Poland is neutral, free from stereotypes and skepticism. The noteworthy thing is that, as the newsletter is the official informative bulletin of the European Commission in Greece, it should have included more press releases related directly to the achievements of the Polish presidency, and more events and topics related to that subject.

Tovima.gr

The news portal *www.tovima.gr* belongs to the same media organization as the newspaper *To Vima* and has succeeded in filling the gap in every-day news coverage that has occurred due to the cancellation of the

newspaper's daily printed edition. As a result, the journalists, correspondents and authors of opinions, who are engaged in news coverage, work both for the printed weekly edition and for the daily online edition as well. So the major actors involved, as well as the frames and perspectives presented, reflect the same opinions as in the newspaper *To Vima*.

For the sampling period from June 2011 until January 2012, 364 news items with reference to Poland were posted. Only ten of them were directly related to the Polish EU presidency (see Figure 4). The rest referred to Poland in terms of commenting on historical facts (Nazi concentration camps), cultural and major sporting events (i.e. EURO 2012), interviews with distinguished personalities (prime ministers, politicians, authors, athletes, scientists, etc), book and film reviews, technological achievements, agricultural productivity, financial investments, tourism, immigration, criminality, etc. So, the most frequent use of the term *Poland* in the texts (both in news items referring directly or not to the Polish presidency) was the one emphasizing the role of Poland as a new EU country, host of a meeting, organizer of an event or as the venue of a meeting/event. In many of the news items, Poland was explicitly mentioned in the texts as a post-communist country implicitly suggesting some characteristics with negative connotations, or as a former Eastern European country with European orientation and perspectives. In general, the website's attitude towards Poland was neutral, but there were explicit hints with a negative notion about the role of the country.

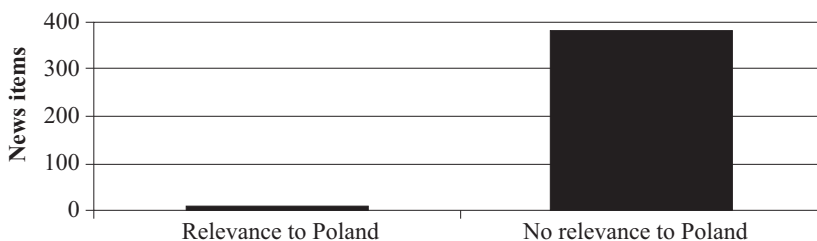


Figure 4. Greek online media's news items' relevance to Poland

The ten news items referring directly to the Polish EU presidency dealt mainly with the issues of the EU Council and the eurozone summits, the future of Europe and the euro, and the European financial and identity crisis. A few of them were displayed on the front webpage with a link to a new page. In terms of the foreign news domestication strategy, their publication was usually followed by other news items – mainly reports – about

the Greek politicians' actions on the sidelines of the EU summits hosted in Poland. In terms of making explicit reference to Greek nationals and to the impact on Greece, the Polish presidency 'inspired' authors to publish their opinions and analyses about the future of Europe and the role of the 'big' member states in the financial crisis.

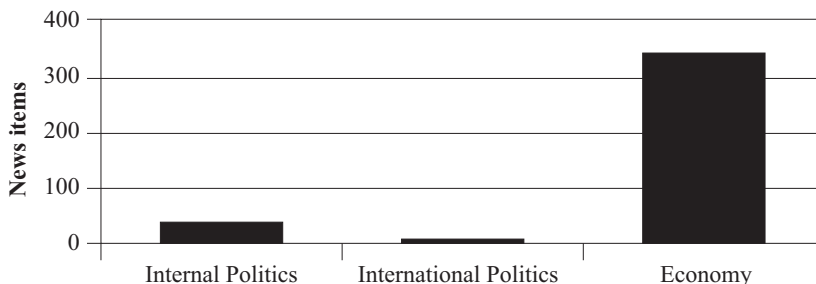


Figure 5. Dominant topic

As *tovima.gr* is a news portal with a continuous news flow, many of the news items of the sampling period received comments originating from readers.

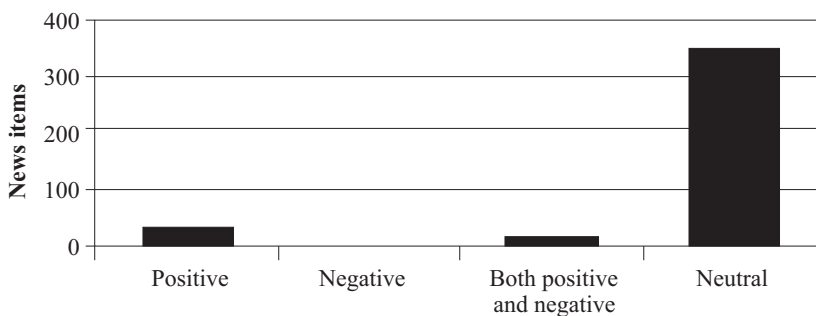


Figure 6. Attitudes towards Poland

During the period from June 15, 2011 to January 30, 2012 there are 56 journalistic pieces referring to Poland. We find the term *Poland* as a country of origin in articles and opinions which discuss literature, art, famous writers, cultural events; as a host country in news items about the EURO 2012 Football Championships; as a venue for the EU, EcoFin and eurozone summits. The use of the term *Poland* has a localizing function.

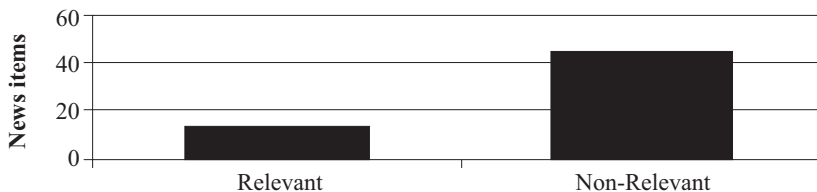


Figure 7. Relevance to Poland

Nevertheless, there are articles and opinions regarding Poland as an ex-communist and Eastern European country, a partner and ally of Russia, with a neutral perspective from the newspaper, with some small reference to stereotypes about the country, but with clear references to Greek nationals and to the impact on Greece. There is also a report analyzing the solutions proposed for helping Greece escape from the financial crisis, with special reference to the development of the Greek tourism sector as financial ‘relief’ for Greece and with relevance to Poland. Moreover, there are articles (very few) referring directly to the Polish presidency with a very positive perspective and attitude. It is worth mentioning that the newspaper published interviews with foreign experts analyzing the role of Poland as a new EU member and post-communist country, in an effort to expunge the stereotypes surrounding it.

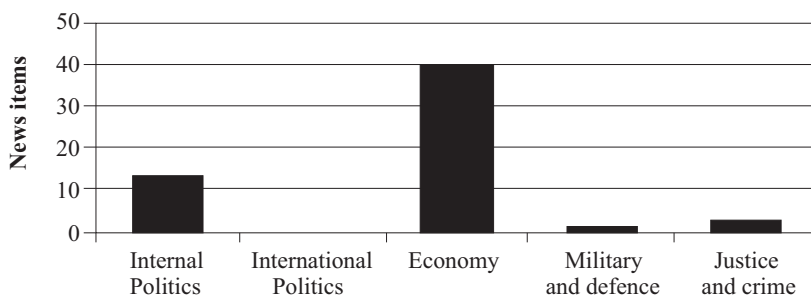


Figure 8. Dominant topics

The newspaper puts emphasis on Poland’s priority to help the EU in its efforts to manage the debt crisis threatening Greece and the eurozone. In terms of political orientation, great importance is given to the Eastern Partnership between Poland and other Eastern European countries dealing with the issue of the European identity crisis, seen from a positive perspective and attitude.

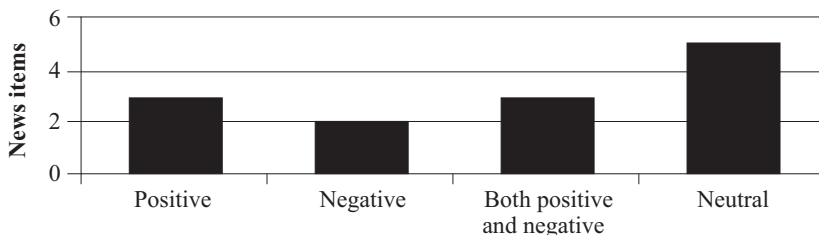


Figure 9. Attitude towards Poland

Conclusions

The study reaches the conclusion that the coverage of the Polish EU presidency in the Greek media was not satisfactory or proportional to the range and significance of such a European issue. The six months of the Polish presidency of the European Council, although it may have been the most difficult period in the history of the project, due to the eurozone crisis, did not appear much in the news coverage in the Greek media investigated.

The coverage of EU issues in the news flow in the Greek media was in general very high, due to the fact that all these issues included explicit reference to Greek nationals and to the impact on the country, as they were strongly connected to the severe financial crisis in Greece. So, the element of the domestication of foreign news, along with the elements of foreign news values and the valuation/attitude towards Poland, affected the Greek media's criteria for the selection of events taking place in the EU becoming news items and played a key role in the Greek media's agenda setting. Due to the fact that the Polish presidency coincided with the climax of the financial crisis in Greece, the Greek media focused their attention on the coverage of EU news directly connected to that subject and its impact on the European Union and the eurozone. It is noteworthy that the Greek media only covered in detail the official opening and the expiry of the Polish presidency of the EU Council. Afterwards, the information focus shifted to the financial crisis.

Given the research findings, the news coverage of the Polish EU presidency was different in printed editions, online editions and television. The newspaper *To Vima*, its online edition and website, *Tovima.gr*, were found to have the major proportion of EU news and news about Poland. Although public television is supposed to have high coverage of EU news,

due to its mission to inform the public, in the said study it was shown to have broadcast a small amount of news referring to the Polish presidency. The same is apparent on the Greek state television website, *ert.gr*, which is supposed to post more detailed news items on the EU, and more frequently, as it has a continuous news flow. On the contrary, *ert.gr* posted very few news items about the Polish presidency, and all the others with reference to Poland had nothing to do with the presidency itself. Along with the small amount of news items, we observed a low frequency in broadcasting news about the Polish presidency.

As far as the news items' reference to Poland is concerned, their majority was not related directly to the Polish presidency and came under the sections of economy, politics and opinions and sport (mainly related to the hosting of the European Football Championships, EURO 2012). So the events that attracted the Greek media's attention had no relation to the presidency and the picture that the Greek audience received was of Poland as a host/venue of important events.

In relation to the sources of information, the newspaper *To Vima* is supposed to have correspondents and staff specializing in foreign news, but in many cases the newspaper uses the Athens News Agency/Macedonian Press Agency (national news agency) without mentioning that source of information. Moreover, although the public television website is supposed to have staff expertise in the area of international news, the main source of information is again the Athens News Agency/Macedonian Press Agency. The national news agency is used by all the media investigated – apart from the Representation of the European Commission in Greece.

In terms of the domestication of foreign news, the strategy used in order to make the events of the EU Polish presidency relevant for the Greek audience was to make explicit reference to Greece and to the impact of the news on the country. When attention was paid to the news about the Polish EU presidency, it was usually in connection with national political leaders, parties or national issues, while the remaining EU issues were often pushed aside. So the domestication strategy of the Greek news organizations confirmed one of the main parameters of the agenda setting process: the aspects of an issue which are covered in the news – and the relative emphasis on these various aspects of an issue – makes a considerable difference in how people view that issue.

The comparative research brought to the fore the low visibility of Poland in news coverage in Greece, which was accompanied by a generally

neutral attitude that enhanced the low recognition of the former by the latter. So, the general attitude towards Poland was neutral, and in some cases positive, emphasizing the fact that it was an opportunity for Poland to change ideas about post-communist countries. This was a positive framework, within which they presented Poland as a new EU member and as a new concept in the 'European family'. There were some hints about the country's ex-communist past, indicative of some media's skepticism, but the general notion was not negative. Many of the news items, apart from opinions and commentaries, reflected the journalists' skepticism about the role of Poland holding the presidency. Other news items tried to remove stereotypes that have been implanted in Greek public opinion.

The most frequent use of the term *Poland* in the texts (both in news items referring directly or not to the Polish presidency) was the one emphasizing the role of Poland as a new EU country, host of a meeting, organizer of an event or as the venue of a meeting/event. In many news items, Poland was explicitly mentioned in the texts as a post-communist country implicitly suggesting some characteristics with negative connotations, or as a former Eastern European country with a European orientation and perspective.

To sum up, the Greek media paid not as much attention to the Polish presidency of the EU Council as they should have. It is a fact that the Polish presidency of the EU Council coincided with the climax of a severe financial crisis in Greece. Undoubtedly, that fact played a significant role in the construction of the Greek media's agenda setting and in the information process as well. As a result, the Greek media focused their attention on the coverage of the Greek economic crisis and its impact on the European Union and the eurozone. In other words, the Greek media were engaged in a perpetual effort to inform the Greek audience about all the current developments on the crucial subject of the future of Greece in the European Union and to fulfill their mission as gatekeepers in the information process. And that leads us to the final remark, that Greek public opinion did not obtain a complete picture of the Polish presidency's key achievements. As a result, the low visibility and recognition of Poland in Greece led to low expectations towards the country that was at the helm of the EU Council and had a unique opportunity to exploit the advantages from its leading position in the EU. In conclusion, as far as Greece is concerned, the Polish EU presidency did not succeed in attracting the Greek media's attention as an actor in charge of the European Council.

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Abstract

The purpose of the paper is to explore and analyze the news coverage of the first Polish presidency of the EU Council in the Greek media, as well as the role of the Greek media in the Greek citizens' information process about issues regarding the Polish presidency and the promotion of European matters. Through a comparative quantitative and qualitative content analysis of the media, the paper aims to highlight the representations of the Polish EU presidency in the Greek media. In addition, the essay casts light on some crucial questions that arise: (1) How did the Polish EU presidency attract the Greek media's attention? (2) What are the Greek media's criteria for selection of EU-related events taking place in a foreign European country which are of great importance? (3) How many news items regarding the Polish EU presidency appeared on Greek TV, in newspapers and online media? (4) How frequently did representations of the term *Poland*, *Polish EU presidency* and *Polish* appear in Greek news items? (5) What was the Greek media's attitude towards this foreign country? (6) How did the Greek media present the Polish EU presidency? As a host of numerous meetings and events or as an actor in charge, defining the major directions of the EU policy? (7) What was the attention given to Poland and to the Polish EU presidency in particular? (8) Within what spectrum did the Greek media comment on the role of the Polish EU presidency as chairman of the EU Council for 6 months?